

Chinchilla.—The first chinchillas were imported into Canada in 1937 and since then growth of the industry has been steady. In 1962 Canadian raisers marketed 11,268 chinchilla pelts, the average realization being \$13.50 per pelt. At present, chinchillas are being raised in 468 locations throughout Canada, the principal producers, in order of importance, being British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and Alberta.

In planning for the future, the most pressing problem to be overcome by the raisers is the low production rate. Currently, kits raised to maturity annually from each breeding female average only $1\frac{1}{2}$ and the goal of the industry is to increase this production to three or four kits per female. The reasons why the number of animals raised to maturity is comparatively small are numerous, ranging from failure of the female to conceive to loss of the litter for a variety of causes.

During the forty-year period from 1914, when the trapping of wild chinchillas in South America was prohibited, to 1954, when the first sale of ranch-raised pelts was held, this fur was completely off the market. As a result, when chinchilla again became available members of the fur industry knew very little about it, details of the dressing and manufacture of the pelts had to be re-learned and the fur had to be promoted anew at the retail level. Today a firm market exists for chinchilla and the business appears well on its way toward securing a place in the world fur industry.

Fur Marketing.—The bulk of Canada's fur production is sold by public auction through eight fur auction houses located in Montreal, North Bay, Winnipeg, Regina, Edmonton and Vancouver. Most of the ranched mink pelts are shipped directly from farm to auction house where they are sold for the account of the producer, the auction house charging a commission for its services based on a percentage of the selling price. In the case of wildlife pelts, a small percentage of the total catch goes direct from trapper to auction house but most of these furs pass initially from the trapper to the local fur buyer who may ship his collection to one of the selling outlets or may sell it outright to a travelling fur buyer who will add the furs to his larger collection before shipping.

The selling season commences in December with large offerings of ranched mink pelts, and later in the same month initial quantities of the new season's wild furs become available. Trapping in the northern regions gets under way around the same time as the pelting of ranched mink but, because of the slower process involved in shipping furs from isolated areas, major quantities of wildlife pelts are not generally available until January. In this and succeeding months, offerings of ranched mink continue, along with quantities of the world-famed Canadian wild mink, beaver and other varieties.

At the auctions, furs are purchased through competitive bidding by buyers who may be purchasing for their own accounts or who may represent firms in any part of the world. Canadian furs are traditionally sold in the raw or unprocessed state, facilitating entry into the many countries that maintain tariffs on imports of processed furs. In order to ensure that the auctions will be successful, it is important to obtain maximum possible purchasing power at these events, in the form of a substantial number of buyers. Mink are now being produced in many countries, the crops reaching the various markets practically simultaneously. Therefore, competition for the buyers' favour is keen and mink breeder associations in all the important producing countries are studying the problem of how to increase buyer attendance at their auctions. In this connection, Canadian fur auction houses are co-operating with each other in the scheduling of their sales, with a view to making it convenient for visiting buyers to take in two or more successive auctions while they are in this country. Also, Canada Mink Breeders' Association is encouraging its members to adopt uniform pelting methods with the object of producing large numbers of pelts having a similar appearance, rather than the mixed offering that formerly resulted from the use of a variety of pelt-handling methods. At the auction level these uniformly handled pelts facilitate rapid inspection by buyers who might otherwise pass up an auction entirely, due to lack of time to inspect all the offerings being made at the height of the season.